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AUTHOR Saykanic, Donna
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ABSTRACT

For many years, there has been pressure on American schools to restrict or deny students access to books or periodicals deemed objectionable by some individual or group on moral, political, religious, ethnic, racial, or philosophical grounds. Censorship of library books in school media centers is present today. The library media specialist is responsible for maintaining free access to materials through collection development policies, programs, and access policies. Library media specialists promote the principles of intellectual freedom in their media centers by providing resources that create an environment of free inquiry. This paper addresses censorship of library books in school media centers. Discussion falls into the following sections: Selection of a Social Issue and Documentation of its Importance; Description of the Problem in Terms of Multiple Dimensions, Including the Historical Dimension; Selection, Description, and Analysis of the Relevant Political Arena or Arenas: The Political Environment; Creation and Presentation of One Feasible, Political Intervention; and Explication of the Political Intervention Strategy, Including a Critique of its Limitations. Two appendixes include a Request for Reconsideration of Materials form and a descriptive list of the 10 most hated books from 1982 to 1990 according to Stasio (1992). (Contains 18 references.) (AEF)

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ED 449 804

Censorship of Library Books in School Library Media Centers Today

by Donna Saykanic, Ed.D.
Dated: July 14, 2000

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Selection of a Social Issue and Documentation of its Importance

The social issue the writer wants to address is censorship of library books in school media centers today.

Gatti & Gatti (1983) defined the following:

> "Library censorship" is partially because of the IN LOCO PARENTIS doctrine and the "indoctrination theory," courts have traditionally deferred to local school officials in matters of curricular choice and library book selection. Obviously, school officials have a great interest in controlling the materials used in teaching. A growing number of courts have recognized that students also have an interest in and should have some choice in what they are allowed to read. At present, at least two federal courts have held that students possess a constitutional "right to know." These courts usually hold that inherent in the freedom of speech is the right to know. (p. 226)

The problem is that for many years, there has been pressure on American schools to restrict or deny students access to books or periodicals deemed objectionable by some individual or group on moral, political, religious, ethnic, racial, or philosophical grounds. Censorship of library books in school media centers is present today. Some individuals and organized groups assume that schools should be cleared of books, materials, and courses that accommodate ideas that conflict with their viewpoints. The library media specialist is responsible for maintaining

free access to materials through collection development policies, programs, and access policies. Equity and freedom of access to information should be available to all students. The freedom to read must be preserved. Reading is basic to our lives. A student's whole future may depend on it.

Library media specialists promote the principles of intellectual freedom in their media centers by providing resources that create an environment of free inquiry. In our democracy, the freedom to read is of the greatest importance.

Description of the Problem in Terms of Multiple Dimensions, Including the Historical Dimension

Curriculum censorship has always existed as a customary practice. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, content in curriculum was restricted to traditional American values that revolved around the family, work, church, and country. According to authorities, textbooks depicted the Puritan morality, work ethic, achievement, individualism, and American patriotism (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

In the mid twentieth century, English literature, history, and civics textbooks rarely included such subjects as immigrants, minorities, women, poor people, and organized labor. Numerous textbooks ignored our Democratic presidents. The curriculum was not censored, however it only included information teachers thought was appropriate. Textbooks portrayed an idealistic

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American society with traditional and patriotic values. Any information that was considered too controversial was excluded. This policy evoked just infrequent criticism. The problem was that some of the content in the textbooks was sexist and racist. It carried a "hidden curriculum" which represented the interests of dominant groups (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). Significant milestones have been made since then. Davies (1974) noted the following significant milestones in the evolvement of the school library as a multimedia learning laboratory or instructional materials center:

1937 Newark Public School (Newark, New Jersey) established a Department of Libraries, Visual Aids, and radio to provide a unified print and nonprint media service in each of its school libraries.

1939 The Joint Committee of the American Library Association and the National Education Association defined standards for school library service which advocated "a well balanced collection of books, pamphlets and audio-visual aids appropriate to the objectives and needs of the school."

1945 The American Library Association's Committee on Post-War Planning stated in its publication, School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow, that one purpose of the school library was to "help children and young people to become skillful and discriminating users of libraries and of printed and audio-visual materials."

1947 The Library Institute conducted by the University of Chicago in developing the theme, "Youth, Communication, and Libraries" stressed the necessity for libraries to provide

all "ideas" no matter in what form or in what format they were contained.

1949 The American Library Association published Audio-Visual School Library Service by Margaret I. Rufsvold which emphasized that audiovisual as well as printed resources were essential to an educationally functional school library program.

1955 The American Association of School Librarians endorsed by unanimous vote during the ALA conference at Miami Beach the statement that the school library should serve the school as a center for instructional materials.

1958 The Joint American Association of School Librarians--Association of College and Research Libraries--Department of Audio-Visual Instruction of the NEA Committee defined the prerequisites for the attainment of professional status by instructional materials specialists.

1958 The National Defense Education Act provided funds to purchase instructional media to support the teaching of mathematics, science, and foreign languages, and funds to train teachers and librarians in the use of instructional media.

1960 The American Association of School Librarians defined in Standards for School Library Programs the quantitative and qualitative standards for school libraries serving as multimedia learning laboratories.

1961 The Council on Library Resources provided a $100,000. grant to fund the School Library Development Project designed

to provide leadership and guidance to the fifty states in their implementation of the Standards.

1962 The Knapp Foundation, Inc. awarded a $1,130,000. grant for a five-year project to demonstrate the value of a full program of school library services employing multimedia.

1963 The National Education Association Project on Instruction recommended in its report, Schools for the 60s, that there be one or more well-planned instructional materials centers in each school system and in each school building.

1964 The National Defense Education Act was extended to include materials essential for the teaching of social studies, reading, and the language arts.

1965 The Elementary and Secondary Education Act through Title II provided federal funds for the specific purpose of establishing and strengthening school libraries.

1968 The American Association of School Librarians initiated the School Library Manpower Project, a five-year program funded by the Knapp Foundation, to study the manpower problem in three aspects: task and job analysis; education for librarianship, and recruitment.

1969 A joint committee of the American Association of School Librarians (ALA) and the Department of Audiovisual Instruction (NEA) published Standards for School Media Programs updating the quantitative requirements for school media programs.

1969 The Commission on Instructional Technology in its report, To Improve Learning, stressed the necessity for the scientifically planned and integrated use of instructional media to support the total teaching and learning process. (p. 70)

The American Association of School Librarians endorsed the School Library Bill of Rights for school library media programs at the Atlantic City Conference, in 1969.

The American Association of School Librarians reconfirms its belief in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association. Library media specialists are responsible for generating understanding of American freedoms through the development of educated and responsible citizens.

Davies (1974) stated that the American Association of School Librarians asserts that the responsibility of the school library media center is:

To provide a comprehensive collection of instructional materials selected in compliance with basic, written selection principles, and to provide maximum accessibility to these materials.

To provide materials that will support the curriculum, taking into consideration the individual's needs, and the varied interests, abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students served.

To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge, and that will develop literary, cultural, and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.

To provide materials which reflect the ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to the American and world heritage and culture, thereby enabling students to develop an intellectual integrity in forming judgments.

To provide a written statement, approved by the local Boards of Education, of the procedures for meeting the challenge of censorship of materials in school library media centers.

To provide qualified professional personnel to serve teachers and students. (p. 73)

According to the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Library Association, the publishing industry, and writers, the pressures for censorship are great throughout our society.

In 1972, The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) held a three-day study group entitled, "The Right to Read: What?: Free Access and Censorship, K-8," at the Minneapolis Convention. Its objective was to see the different ways in which censorship affects elementary and middle school children's libraries and children's book publishing houses. A consensus emerged that whichever ways schools and libraries choose to cope with censorship matters locally, the existence of definite written book selection policies, on file with administrations, lessened the likelihood of censorship becoming an issue in the community. The study group submitted a resolution that a committee be

appointed to provide leadership in the establishment of policy guidelines for the selection of books and other materials. The "Right to Read" is addressed to parents and the community. It is printed by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Donelson (1972) stated the following as the result of the work of that committee:

> We at the elementary level had long felt secure, with only an infrequent or obscure notice in a local newspaper from a disgruntled organization or group of parents objecting to a trade book for young children. Now, some elementary teachers say they fear retribution if using certain books; librarians speak of their experiences with pressure groups; and editors tell us that words and illustrations are deleted or changed in certain books in some schools and libraries. In addition, attorneys, parents, and teachers of children's literature have told us that children's books and nonprint media are no longer safe from rigorous community scrutiny. There is censorship of children's materials at the elementary level, of textbooks, nonprint media, and trade books. (p. 4)

In June 1973, the issue attracted attention nationally as a result of the United States Supreme Court decision on obscenity. That decision reaffirmed the principle that "obscenity" is not protected by the First Amendment and the fifty states and their communities may continue to prohibit the publication and sale of obscene material. The Court redefined material which can be labeled obscene without infringing on First Amendment rights

as the following:

1. Taken as a whole, it appeals to prurient interest in sexuality.

2. It portrays in a patently offensive way sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable law.

3. Taken as a whole it does not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. To be prohibited as obscene, the material must meet all three requirements (Davies, 1979).

In 1976, the Committee on Bias and Censorship in the Elementary School was established to work in cooperation with the Task Force on Racism and Bias in the Teaching of English and with other NCTE committees to provide leadership in the establishment of guidelines for policies in the selection of books and other materials in the elementary school.

The NCTE stated that the following are forms of censorship:

1. Subtle censorship of "selection." The individual or group making selections can be one-sided.

2. Deliberate exclusion of certain books. Teachers and librarians are fearful at times that community groups will object to a book. This fear has kept books out of some libraries or hidden in storage closets.

3. Alteration of books. Pages or words are deleted from books in anticipation of objections.

4. Required book list. Some school systems require that students read all books on a list. However, books can be subtly excluded from the student's reading of great literature.

5. Suppression of materials as a result of community pressure. Community members may object to the purchase of certain books for students. At times, violence and book burning have occurred from these heated debates.

6. Direct edit. An "authority" orders that certain materials are to be excluded from the collection.

7. Deliberate omission. The collection of books excluded a balanced representation of people and events. In many cases the materials are stereotyped.

8. Curtailment of funds. Funds for materials that are controversial results unfortunately in a reduction of funding for all the materials (Davies, 1979).

Selection, Description, and Analysis of the Relevant Political Arena or Arenas: the Political Environment

The censorship of books in school libraries has involved all types of school systems; both suburban and urban; rich and poor; predominantly minority and predominantly white; etc. Parent groups, various community groups, and taxpayer groups involved with censorship concerns have displayed different levels of tolerance, ranging from heated school-community conflicts and serious watch-dog committees to lukewarm newspaper editorials and questions at PTA meetings (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

Both the local and state boards of education are pressured by special-interest groups to censor books. Librarians, teachers, and school administrators are also involved in the political arena.

Publishers of school textbooks and educational materials are caught in the middle. They are forced to compromise. Today, publishers exercise self-censorship to placate dissenting factions and to avoid alienating pressure groups. Textbook editors must have a shrewd sense of the educational marketplace and be highly aware of numerous pressure groups. Publishers must be sensitive to the desires of textbook selection committees. Recent data shows that all major textbook companies conform to the preferences of the larger educational markets. Examples are the most populous states such as New York, California, and Illinois. Together these three states accounted for more than 23% of the total national expenditure on curriculum materials in one recent year. Other examples are the major adoption states of California, Texas, and Florida. These three states greatly impact the books available for study in other states. Most other school systems do not have much choice but to go along with the specifications, dictates, and price maintenance of a small handful of school systems in a few states (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988).

The real issue here is censorship: the same First Amendment rights that have grasped the country over the past few years. There were 229 attempts during the 1990-1991 school year to place books on a "restricted" library shelf or ban them from classrooms and media centers in the public school system. These incidents represent a 20% increase from the 1989-1990 school year and a 33% increase from 1988 to 1989 (Reichmann, 1993).

Impressions is a kindergarten to sixth grade series (published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston). It represents a current educational trend to introduce more exciting, literature-based reading material into the primary grades. There are 822 selections in the series that include traditional folk and fairy tales, ancient myths, and modern poetry, and excerpts from the writings of Lewis Carroll, Laura Ingalls Wilder, C.S. Lewis, and Martin Luther King, Jr. There are many monsters, goblins, witches, and creepy creatures depicted..

The series was the subject of a dispute between the school board and opposing parent groups. Robert Simonds is the head of Citizens for Excellence in Education, a national organization based in Costa Mesa, California. He counsels parents and fundamentalist church groups. He declared a war against the textbooks. He cited 463 objectionable entries in the readers and 170 bizarre illustrations. He claimed that the material encourages children to not obey the authority of their parents and church leaders. Also, he claimed that children were exposed to witchcraft, and the occult. Mostly, he objected to the themes of violence and death that were throughout the poems and stories.

Impressions has been banned from study in five school districts in the state of California. There are twelve other challenges still pending in the states of Oregon, Ohio, Colorado, and Washington.

Robert Simonds continues to wage his war on the Impressions series through his organization's 875 chapters nationwide.

There are over 125,000 parents involved in awareness groups found in over 1,000 churches.

Parents have a right to monitor the reading materials that their children utilize. They also have the right to question any material of concern to them. Reading materials may be offensive to some due to the following:

1. Explicit nudity or sexuality
2. Offensive language
3. Glorifies violence
4. Characters are witches or the devil
5. Dull, didactic content
6. Depreciates individual family's values
7. Terrorizing content
8. Uninteresting content
9. Promotes stereotypes
10. Promotes sexism
11. Content too hard to read
12. Content not related to student's interests
13. Excludes diversity in terms of handicaps
14. Books written with a bias intended to persuade the student of a religious or political point of view
15. Books that present any racial or national group in a derogatory manner

Dr. Seuss was under scrutiny when a parent from the northern California timber town of Laytonville opposed to The Lorax for its pro-tree sentiments.

However, not all parental complaints are so subjective. People for the American Way are not concerned with the "three R's." They are more concerned with the "three Ss'"-- swear words, Satanism, and sex.

Parents with fundamentalist beliefs are opposed to sex education in the schools. The books Changing Bodies, Changing Lives by Ruth Bell and The Teenage Body Book by Charles Wibblesman and Kathy McCoy were removed from Alabama's Lauderdale County school district. Both of these books were optional readings in high school health classes. The members of the Eagle Forum are a powerful national body of moral reformers founded by Phyllis Schlafly. They were strongly opposed to the reading materials utilized in the health class. Their goal is to stop all health education programs. To them, these programs are a threat to family autonomy.

Many popular modern authors have been attacked by parents and church groups. Judy Blumes's novel Blubber was removed from elementary-school libraries in Leander, Texas, for using language and content too sexually explicit. Blume's book Forever was removed from the shelves of the middle-school library in Turner, Maine. Judy Blume's stories help adolescents understand their changing sexuality and are a target for criticism.

Satanism is another theme in censorship campaigns. Parents and religious groups have in many cases removed from library shelves the works by such respected authors as Roald Dahl, Isaac Asimov, and Shel Silverstein.

In 1990, in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, 114 of 229 education challenges occurred. However, most of these attacks were beaten back by the intervention of school superintendents and local school boards (Smith, 1991).

Gatti & Gatti (1983) cite that the courts stated the following:

> A library is a storehouse of knowledge. When created for a public school it is an important privilege created by the state for the benefit of the students in the school. That privilege is not subject to being withdrawn by succeeding school boards whose members might desire to "winnow" the library for books the content of which occasioned their displeasure or disapproval. (p. 226)

As a library media specialist, the writer is opposed to censorship. The writer strongly agrees with the NCTE's "Students' Right to Read" and adheres to the "Library Bill of Rights." The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the media specialist must be defended.

Creation and Presentation of One Feasible, Political Intervention

The primary objective of the school's library media center is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the school. It is the responsibility of the center to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view (Davies, 1974).

The American Library Association (ALA) (1988) cites the following are the specific objectives of the mission of the school library media program:

1. To provide intellectual access to information through systematic learning activities which develop cognitive strategies for selecting, retrieving, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, and creating information at all age levels and in all curriculum content areas.

2. To provide physical access to information through (a) a carefully selected and systematically organized collection of diverse learning resources, representing a wide range of subjects, levels of difficulty, communication formats, and technological delivery systems; (b) access to information and materials outside the library media center and the school building through such mechanisms as inter-library loan, networking and other cooperative agreements, and online searching and online searching of databases; and (c) providing instruction in the operation of equipment necessary to use the information in any format

3. To provide learning experiences that encourage users to become discriminating consumers and skilled creators of information through introduction to the full range of communications media and use of the new and emerging information technologies

4. To provide leadership, instruction, and consulting assistance in the use of instructional and information technology and the use of sound instructional design principles

5. To provide resources and activities that contribute to lifelong learning, while accommodating a wide range of differences in teaching and learning styles and in instructional methods, interests, and capacities

6. To provide a facility that functions as the information center of the school

7. To provide resources and learning activities that represent a diversity of experiences, opinions, social and cultural perspectives, supporting the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are prerequisite to effective and responsible citizenship in a democracy. (p. 2)

It is the responsiblility of the school library media specialist to take the lead in translating the mission into programs that make effective access to information and ideas a reality. To achieve this mission requires the following:

1. Full integration of the library media program into the curriculum

2. A partnership among the library media specialist, district-level personnel, administrators, teachers, and parents

3. The serious commitment of each of those partners to the value of universal and unrestricted access to information and ideas (American Library Association, 1988).

A written "policy statement" approved by the local Board of Education should include the procedures for meeting the challenge of censorship of materials in school library media centers. The selection policy for print and nonprint materials should be written by all school and library personnel who have the expertise and knowledge. This policy is essential, because without a policy, teachers, librarians, and administrators are vulnerable to censorship attacks on the curriculum (Donelson, 1972).

A written selection policy that specifically deals with censorship and is incorporated into a policy manual will most likely take care of most problems that arise (Kinney, 1992). Librarians must organize a network of parents who believe in intellectual freedom and who are willing to notify school board members to oppose removing a book. A network like this must be organized prior to a crisis. This is essential. Librarians need to lobby decision makers at all levels of government to ensure that laws involving access to materials are not overly broad or ambiguous (Kinney, 1992). The library profession has resisted efforts to restrict access to information.

The following are some approaches and considerations if and after censorship problems arise (and before a formal complaint procedure is initiated):

1. The librarian or teacher should inform the principal of any complaint and how it will be handled.
2. Librarians and teachers should urge their principal to read the material objected to. Afterwards, an exchange should be made of the reasons for utilizing the material with children. Also, a school board member and a local priest, minister, or rabbi should read the material.
3. If a parent complains about material, make an appointment for a later date. Assure the parent that the children's best interest is in mind.
4. Material in question should be reread.
5. Reviews of the material should be collected from such publications as Language Arts, English Journal, Horn Book, School Library Journal, and other professional publications.
6. If the librarian or teacher asks three to five parents who are supportive to read the material being questioned and asks them for their written reaction, addressed to the librarian or teacher and principal.

The librarian or teacher should meet with the complaining parent to review the school's materials selection policies and procedures. There should be a discussion of all the factors and considerations that influenced the decision to include in the collection the offending materials. If the parent does not

agree, then he/she should be asked to register a formal complaint. The form developed by NCTE will be utilized for local use. (A copy of the form, entitled "Request for Reconsideration of Materials" can be found in Appendix A).

The purpose of the form is to get parents to state clearly what they find offensive, why they find it to be so, and what they would recommend as suitable alternative materials for their children. This enables parents to feel involved with schools and libraries and not to be in control of them.

When a teacher, librarian, administrator, or board member can discuss the rationale behind utilizing a book, film, etc. in the school, citing its review, the reactions of children to it, and its value, most parents will accept the fact that there are reasons for including this particular work in the classroom or library. It is essential not to make the parents think they are interfering. It is dangerous, in asserting the importance of the First Amendment, to make parents feel that an adversary relationship exists between the community on the one hand and schools and libraries on the other. If this feeling exists, it could eventually lead to a public hearing and local press coverage that may separate different elements in a community. Thus, it is the children who will become the victims if this dissension takes place (NCTE Committee, 1978).

Explication of the Political Intervention Strategy, Including a Critique of its Limitations

Unfortunately, not all books can be defended and poor selection choices may have been made prior to current policy. Even though the library media specialist must be familiar with the collection, this takes a great deal of time. A request for reconsideration of materials may occur before the librarian has examined the whole collection. However, most books that are requested for reconsideration will be defensible (Karpisek, 1989).

There are times when the parent may disagree and wish to pursue the matter further. The principal immediately refers the matter to the superintendent's office with documents confirming school efforts to resolve the matter. Copies of the written request and the questionnaire (Request for Reconsideration of Materials) are submitted to the superintendent's office.

A district-level committee that includes the library media supervisor, a board of education member, the library media specialist, and other supervisors appropriate within the district review the challenged material. Written comments, recommendations, and signatures are appended to the original questionnaire at the conclusion of this panel's deliberations. The request for reconsideration, the school recommendation, and the district committee recommendation are presented to the superintendent

whose office notifies the parent of the decision.

The final decision in the district lies with the board of education. If the parent is not satisfied with the recommendation made by the district-level committee, an appeal can be made to this council The decision of this council is binding with the district and stands unless challenged through the legal system (Karpisek, 1989).

Censorship attempts are a reality today. The Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association reported approximately 1,000 attempts in 1982. However, this figure did not include requests for reconsideration that were handled successfully in a quiet manner within the school system. A 1980 study conducted by the American Library Association, the Association of American Publishers, and the Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Development reported that 26% of those responding to a questionnaire had challenged materials during the two previous years (Karpisek, 1989).

When a written selection policy statement and procedure are in place, the bad experience created by a request for reconsideration is reduced. A key factor in the outcome of a challenge is whether the board selection policy was followed.

The school principal has a strong influence on the attitude of the school library media specialist and the outcome of challenges to materials (Smith, 1991).

The most difficult way for library media specialist to

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approach the censorship problem is to fight their own school board, which could mean losing their job. On account of so few jobs available today, this is not an option that most library media specialists are willing to take. One positive solution is for the library media specialist to work on an ongoing basis with the school board regarding the issues of freedom to read and the age-old library tradition of protecting people's rights under the United States Constitution. If the school board is prepared and educated prior to a problem occurring, the library media specialist will not have to fight it. Thus, the school board will find the decision against censorship easy to make despite the pressure by special interest groups (Kinney, 1992).

Library media specialists must facilitate understanding of censorship and the unique role libraries play in protecting a person's freedom to read and have access to information to their own teachers, principal, and school board of education.

Many parents throughout the United States are truly disturbed by certain things they see in their children's reading materials. The parent, by showing concern, is being responsible. It is within their rights to question any reading material that concerns them. Many times censorship grows out of fear of ideas. Parents may not feel comfortable with the subject matter. However, it may be of great interest to children.

Some parents quietly ask for alternate reading materials for their children. They exercise a legitimate right to disagree. These concerned parents just want to protect their children.

However, some parents are more vocal and form militant censorship crusades. Parents who initiate militant censorship crusades to take books away from other people's children are attacking the general public's constitutional rights. A dangerous precedent is formed if people can remove some reading materials that they find offensive to them. In that case, if anything can be removed that people disagree with, the library shelves would be empty (Stasio, 1992).

The long range results are the most important. If schools have removed books from libraries that might make parents or members of the community angry, students are educated in a restrictive educational climate.

Equity and freedom of access to information should be available to all students. It should not be impeded by social, cultural, economic, geographic, or technological constraints.

There are two differing viewpoints with censorship: those for and those against. There is a price to pay when certain literary voices are silenced.

Librarians and teachers seem to view political power as the basic issue. According to Judith F. Krug, the director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, the leaderships of the rightist organizations are highly sophisticated and dedicated. She cites how skillfully

nationally based Christian morality groups have turned isolated parent protests into powerful political lobbies. These lobbyists show the parents how to organize, work the press, and target certain members of local school boards. Robert Simonds openly admits that the ultimate goal of his fundamentalist ministry is to form strong "parental representation" on each of the 15,400 school boards in the United States. This would enable parents to outvote and override professional educators on every front (Stasio, 1992).

Both sides of the issue of censorship do not see the devastating impact of any battles, won or lost, on the community. For example, did a tenth grade teacher in Whitesville, New York win her viewpoint when she was adamant about the value of a challenged book and was fired for being insensitive to community values? Another example is when the chairperson of the district school board in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, resigned after his controversial ruling on a textbook challenge. It is essential that school boards think if they are actually "winning" the battle when they censor themselves, and keep certain educational materials off the curriculum in order to prevent threats by book banners (Stasio, 1992).

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APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Title_____ __Book ___Periodical __Other___

Author _____

Publisher _____

Request initiated by _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone ____

Do you represent:

____ Yourself _____

____ An organization (name) _____

1. To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific. Cite pages or sections). _____

2. Did you read, view, or hear the entire work? _____

What parts? _____

3. What do you feel might be the result of exposure to this work?

_____

4. For what age group would you recommend this work? _____

5. What do you believe is the theme of this work? _____

_____

6. Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary or other critics? _____

7. What would you like you library/school to do about this work?

____ Do no assign/lend it to my child

_____ Return it to the staff selection committee/department for re-evaluation.

____ Other. Explain. _____

8. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated?

_____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

THE TEN MOST HATED BOOKS FROM 1982 to 1990 ACCORDING TO STASIO

Stasio (1992) found the following to be the ten most hated books, from 1982 to 1990:

1. Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck. Classic study of migrant farm workers during the Great Depression. "Loaded with profanity ... degrading the black people... using God's name in vain," charged a parent in Linden, Michigan. Banned in Watson Chapel, Arkansas, 1990.

2. The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger. Masterpiece of adolescent alienation and the humor to survive it. Challenged in four California school districts in 1990. "It uses the Lord's name in vain two hundred times. That's enough reason to ban it right there," said a parent in Boron, California, where the book was removed from reading lists.

3. The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier. The author's irreverant attitude about schools creates "an overall negative attitude about American value," according to protestors in Michigan, New Hampshire, and California, where the book was challenged in 1990.

4. Go Ask Alice by an anonymous author. Cautionary tale about teenage drug addiction, told by one of its victims. Challenged in three states for strong language, frank talk about sex, and "glorification of drug use." A teacher in Whitesville, New York, was fired for continuing to assign it.

5. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain. The

10. The Color Purple by Alice Walker. "Nothing but a bunch of trash" was the objection in Ten Sleep, Wyoming, to this Pulitzer prize-winning novel of a southern black family. "Too sexually graphic" was the cry heard in Michigan and elsewhere. In Oakland, the book raised "troubling ideas about race relations, man's relationship to God, African history, and human sexuality." (p. 121)

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